Sambhar lake of Rajasthan is one of the 25 Ramsar sites identified from India under Ramsar Convention. This lake has also been included in the list of 71 identified wetlands under National Wetland Conservation Programme for conservation and management. This lake is under stress mainly due to siltation and encroachment, resulting in shrinkage of its catchment area.

(c) and <d) An amount of Rs. 186 lakhs has been released for undertaking various conservation activities like catchment areas treatment, survey & mapping and education awareness in Sambhar Lake from 1989 till date. A proposal for catchment area treatment including afforestation work was received from Govt, of Rajasthan during 2005-06. Funds would be released after due processing during the current financial year.

Increase in Investment for Forest Production

†3729. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:
DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the investment is made form Government and private sector to increase the production from forests in the country;

(b) if so, the average annual investment made during the last three years;

(c) the details of this investment made by the public and private sector; and

(d) the increase in the rate of annual production assessed due to investment?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) to (c) The Central Government is providing financial assistance to the State Governments in protecting the forests from fire etc., and for afforestation and regeneration of degraded forests and adjoining forest lands, increasing the productivity

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

of the forests thereby. The financial assistance povided by the Central Government for the last three years is given in statement *(see* below). The Ministry has also initiated the process of public-private partnerships to invite investment of the private sector in the forestry activities. The Ministry is also facilitating in obtaining external aid for forestry projects. Presently, ten Externally Aided Projects are being implemented in the country with a total outlay of Rs. 3,823.44 crores.

(d) Assessment of increase in rate of annual production is not carried out with respect to the investment. However, due to the following measures taken by the Ministry, the forest cover has increased form 637,293 sq. km. in 1999 to 678,333 sq.km. in 2003:

(i) Legal measures such as Indian Forest Act, 1927, Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, and Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and the rules & guidelines made thereunder.

(ii) Management measures like working of forests according to approved Working Plans, Forest Development Agencies and eliciting people's participation through Joint Forest Management.

(iii) Financial measures by providing assistance to the State/Union Territories under Centrally Sponsored Schemes and externally aided projects for protection, especially under Integrated Forest Protection Scheme.

(iv) Public participation approach through Multi-Stakeholder Partnership (MSP), involving State Forest Department, the local village community and the private sector, has been initiated for afforestation of degraded lands.

(v) State Government and Union Territory Administrations have been requested to formulate and implement a comprehensive Media Plan to create mass awareness about tree-planting and protection.

The present growing stock has been estimated at 4,782 million cubic metres in the forest area.

Statement

Details of Financial Assistance Provided by the Central Government

Sl.No.	Name of the Scheme	Amount released under different schemes (Rupees in crores)			Average Annual Investment (Rupees in crores)
		2003-04	2004-05	2006-06	
1.	National Afforestation Programme (NAP)	207.98	233.00	248.58	229.85
2.	Integrated Forest Protection Scheme (lFP)	24.08	54.06	32.60	36.91

Supply of unpolluted water to Towns

3730. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI: Will the Minister of ENVIORNMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the water of holy river Ganges is not only ed for religious purposes, recreational uses such as bathing, boating nd fishing but also serves as the source of water supply to many towns and cities; and

(b) if so, what actiot Government have taken to supply unpolluted water to towns and cities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. In order to ameliorate the water quality of river Ganga, various pollution abatement works are undertaken along the identified polluted stretches of the river. These works include (i) Interception and diversion works to capture the raw sewage flowing into the river through open drains and divert them for treatment (ii) Sewage treatment plant for treating the diverted sewage (iii) Low cost sanitation works to prevent open defecation on river banks (iv) Electric and/or improved wood based crematoria to conserve the use of wood and help in ensuring proper cremation of bodies brought to the burning ghat, (v) River front development works such as improvement of